

INCORPORATING TV TIMES & TV GUIDE

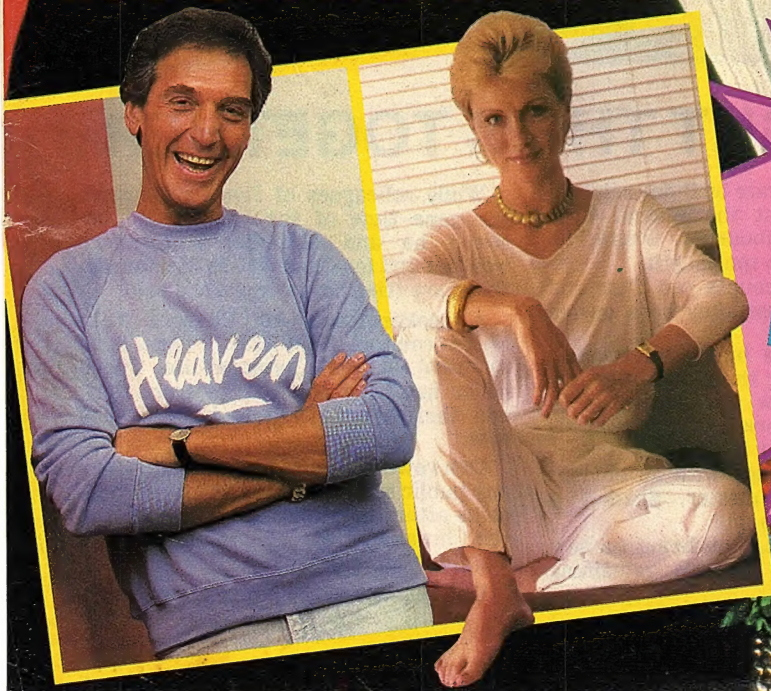
# TV WEEK

BRISBANE  
OCTOBER 23, 1982 70c\*

**ROBERT WAGNER'S  
WORLD TURNS SOUR-AGAIN**  
**CATHERINE WILKIN'S  
BRAVE TV COMEBACK**  
**LARRY HAGMAN'S  
ANGUISH**

*Win A*  
**U.S. TRIP  
IN OUR  
STAR WARS  
CONTEST**

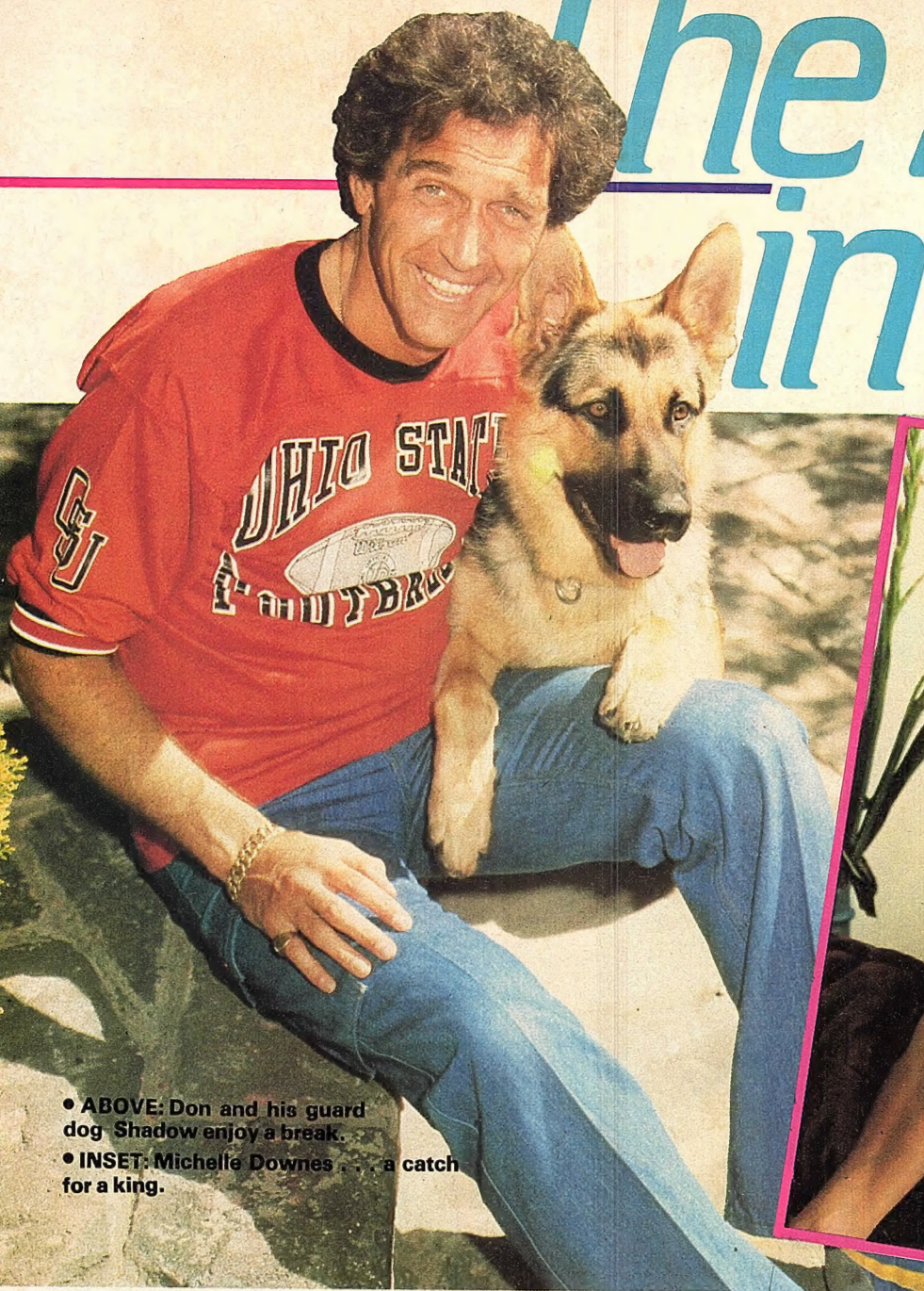
**THE MISS  
AUSTRALIA  
IN DON LANE'S LIFE**



**\$50,000**  
**Scratch**  
**Match 'N' Win**  
Scratch-off  
card inside

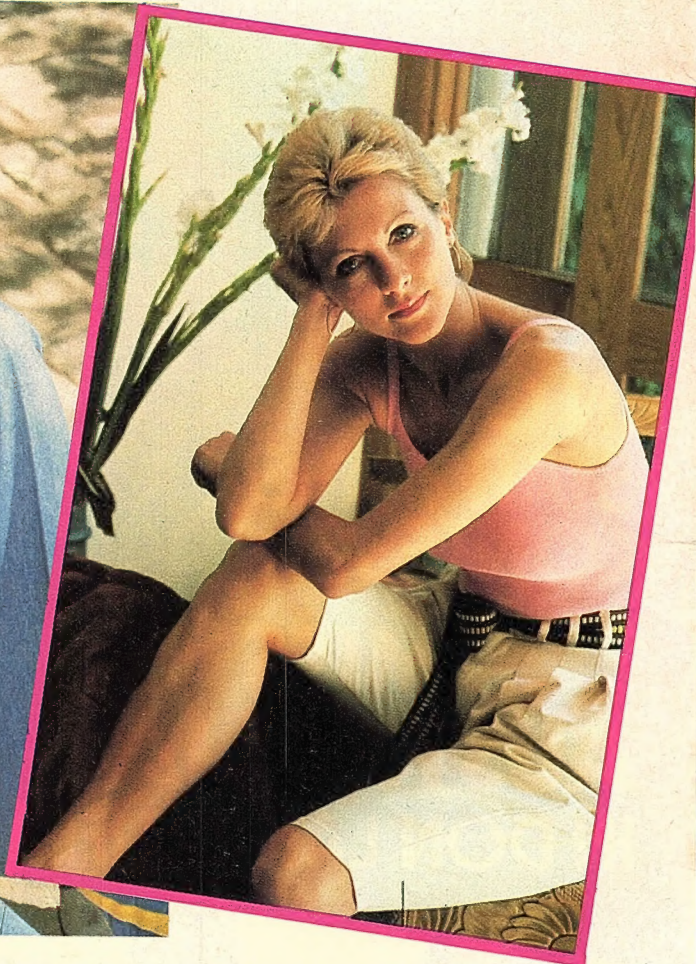


# The Miss in Don



• **ABOVE:** Don and his guard dog Shadow enjoy a break.

• **INSET:** Michelle Downes... a catch for a king.



## THEIR DOGS BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER

THERE'S A new woman in Don Lane's life — Michelle Downes.

But a veil of secrecy has been thrown around their relationship, as Don says he's determined to protect his private life.

Michelle has been seen in the company of the Gold Logie award-winner several times in recent weeks.

First news of the romance emerged while Don's mother, Mrs Dolly Isaacson, was staying with her son at his Melbourne home.

Don arranged a special birthday dinner for his mother — who lives in Florida — and Michelle was among the guests.

Then there were reports that Don had

played host at a private birthday celebration for Michelle at the Walnut Tree restaurant in Melbourne, where he presented her with a special gift.

Friends of the couple say Don and Michelle met because they both owned German shepherds.

Don and Michelle bumped into each other while walking their dogs, Shadow and Chloe. (Shadow was presented to Don several years back by the crew of his Nine Network variety show.)

A trained guard dog with an obvious attachment to his master, Shadow is never far from Don's side.

But on the subject of his beautiful new female companion, Don is remaining tight-lipped.

While colleagues of Don have known for some time of the relationship between he and Michelle, a one-time weather girl for Channel 7 in Melbourne, they have tried not to crowd the pair.

A spokeswoman for Channel 9 in Melbourne told TV WEEK: "There is no comment on Don's personal life. There never has been any change from that, and there's not going to be a change now."

Don vowed he would never again make any public statements about his relationships after the publicity which followed the break-up of his romance with Carmen Van Hoorn.

Di Rolle, one of the segment producers



# Australia Lane's life

of the Don Lane Show, said in an earlier interview: "Don was very upset by the stories about he and Carmen.

"Don can be the toughest man I've met, yet the softest, too. He's certainly one of the most private people I know. Because of that, he tends to be a little guarded with his emotions."

And Dolly has said on several occasions: "My greatest wish for him (Don) would be for him to meet someone he could be happy with in marriage and have children."

Don, now in his late 40s, has been married once.

Michelle, in her late 20s, has two marriages behind her — the first to racing car driver Peter Brock, and the second to leading TV director Tony Neilson, of the Ten Network.

In 1973, at the age of 20, Michelle became the first Victorian for 20 years to take out the Miss Australia crown.

## 'THE TOUGHEST MAN, YET THE SOFTEST

After a whirlwind year as Miss Australia, in which she proved a worthy ambassador for this country, Michelle resumed her own career. She was highly sought after for modelling assignments, both in Australia and later Europe, where she worked for the famed Gucci label.

After going overseas she resumed working as a model in Sydney but later returned to Melbourne, where she was immediately signed up by Alan Murphy and Associates to organise fashion parades and other activities.

Michelle has kept in touch with fellow former Miss Australia winners Gloria Krope and Randy Baker, who both took up public relations positions in Melbourne.

When TV WEEK asked Bert Newton if he knew anything about Don and Michelle's friendship, he said: "I can truthfully say I know nothing about it.

"But if it is true, I'm very thrilled for him.

"I've never questioned him on that aspect of his life, so it's really not something I would know about."

— PATRICE FIDGEON



• MICHELLE AND her doggie pal Chloe.



# Marlboro Milds

The spirit of Marlboro in a mild cigarette.





# VICTORIA BOWS OUT SMILING

## DELVENE JOINS 'SALE' IN A SUDDEN SWITCH

VICTORIA NICOLLS, subject of a quick switch with Delvene Delaney as hostess of the top-rating **Sale Of The Century**, stepped out of the job smiling.

The move was a sudden one, with Victoria taping her last episodes of **Sale Of The Century** the day before the switch was announced.

The news broke in casual fashion on **The Don Lane Show**, when Delvene Delaney was asked by Don about her new role.

Delvene Delaney, who will be seen on air at the end of this month, told TV WEEK she was first offered the job more than two years ago.

She said: "I came down to Melbourne to audition and was given the job. But I decided not to go ahead with it as my child, Allira, was still very young then and I felt she needed me with her."

"The situation is a little different now and I felt the timing was perfect. My parents have come to stay with us and they will be able to help John (Delvene's husband, John Cornell) look after Allira for the one day of the week I'll be needed for taping."

Victoria said she had not tired of **Sale Of The Century**.

"I took 'personality' work in **Sale Of The Century** to kill off Raelene (the part she played in the soapie **The Restless Years**) so I could establish my name as Victoria Nicolls again."

"I've done that now and I've had an absolute ball doing it. But it's time I went back to acting. I am an actress. I trained four years at university doing BA honors as well as my acting training to become an actress."

"They think I'm crazy giving up a job the way the economic situation is at the moment. But as far as I'm concerned,



• **RIGHT: Victoria Nicolls . . . "it's time I went back to acting — I'm an actress." ABOVE: Delvene Delaney . . . she'll do a great job, says Victoria.**

you've got to take a risk to get what you want.

"I really want to go and do other things. I'm only young. I don't want to tie myself down for the rest of my life."

Victoria said it had been an amicable parting with **Sale Of The Century**.

"They were wonderful. They understand that being an actress is my first love. I was a little bit nervous that I might hurt somebody's feelings, or step on toes, or they might get cross with me because I wanted to leave."

Victoria had been thinking about the move for some time.

"Since about March," she said.

"I don't know where it came from. I stayed 2½ years as Raelene and this is nearly 2½ years of **Sale**. I think that's about my limit before I start to feel I'm going stale."

"Obviously I've got this rejuvenating button inside which says: 'OK, baby, it's time to move on!'"

"It starts building up and building up. It's taken me a long time."



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# RIGHT ROYAL

## NINE AND SEVEN SLUG IT OUT IN ROYAL PROGRAM STAKES

AUSTRALIANS WILL see, within a short time of each other, the two controversial specials on the romance and wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

This follows a cloak-and-dagger tussle between the Nine and Seven Networks, each of which has rights to a program.

Both networks have been vying to get their specials to air first to grab the giant share of the audience.

When TV WEEK went to press it was a neck-and-neck race.

The battle is a long one which began when Seven seemed likely to get rights to the Robert Stigwood production, *The Royal Romance Of Charles And Diana*, but was beaten to it by Nine.

Seven replied by winning rights to the American ABC Network's version, but was thwarted by a requirement that it could not screen the program in time to beat Nine.

But secret last-minute negotiations by Seven suggested this could be overcome.

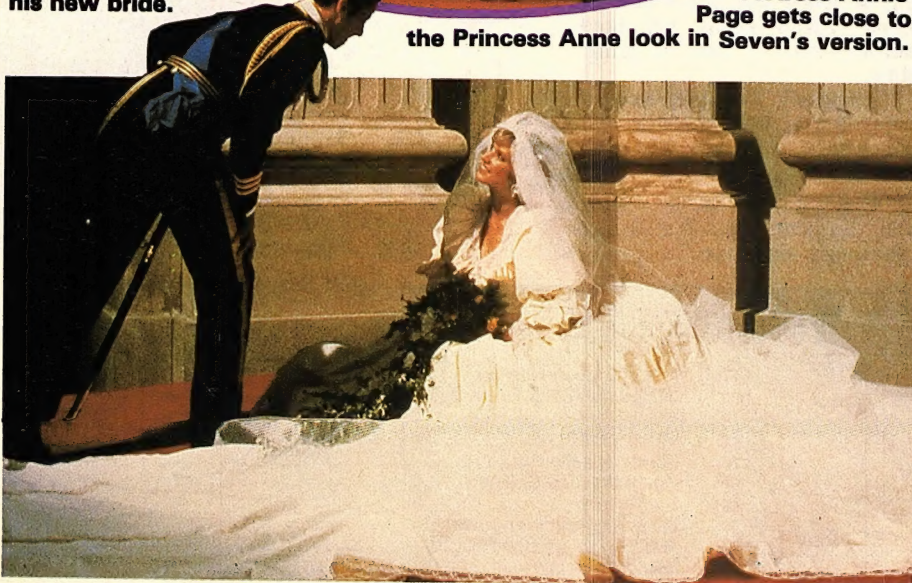
Nine's program stars Princess Di look-

• **TOP LEFT:** The royal couple, *Seven Network* style, with David Robb as Charles and newcomer Caroline Bliss as his bride. **LEFT:** The family group in *Seven's* version, with Rod Taylor (right).



• **BELOW:** Charles bows to his new bride.

• **RIGHT:** Actress Annie Page gets close to the Princess Anne look in *Seven's* version.





# BATTLE



• **LEFT:** Catherine Oxenberg in Nine's version of Princess Di. She describes her role as the "most exploitive in the history of the monarchy".

• **TOP:** Christopher Baines as the proud groom with his lovely wife.

• **ABOVE:** The look-alike Queen and Duke in Nine's effort are played by Dana Wynter and Stewart Granger.

• **BOTTOM LEFT:** The bridal farewell.



alike Catherine Oxenberg as Princess Di, and Seven has newcomer Caroline Bliss as the royal bride.

Both programs tell the story of the fairytale romance culminating in the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana on July 29 last year.

Catherine Oxenberg was chosen for the Nine version because of her facial similarity to Princess Di.

She already had an insight into Prince Charles. She was a former companion of the heir to the throne.

Seven's version did not demand its actors have a close resemblance to the real-life royals.

Much of it was shot on location in London.

The film documents the entire royal romance, beginning with Charles' first meeting with the then Lady Di at a fox hunt.

The most surprising casting in it is that of horror-film star Christopher Lee as Prince Philip.

Australian actor Rod Taylor also has a minor role.

The producers describe the movie as one of the costliest made for television.

• **LEFT:** Catherine in the famous see-through dress situation in the Nine Network's version, *The Royal Romance Of Charles And Diana*.



# Catherine's

Late last year actress Catherine Wilkin was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident in which her companion of four years, Cop Shop actor Bill Stalker, was killed. Now Catherine is making her return to acting.

By **PATRICE FIDGEON**

IN THE late 1970s Catherine Wilkin was respected as one of the finest actresses in Australia.

Outstanding performances in Melbourne Theatre Company productions, including *Travesties*, *Of Mice And Men* and *Othello*, showed audiences and critics alike her extraordinary sensitivity as a performer.

When she played Desdemona in *Othello*, one critic reported: "The casting was almost inevitable."

"With a girl like Catherine in the company, it wasn't likely any other actress would get the part."

"Even in jeans and a scruffy sweater, Catherine looks like just about everybody's idea of Desdemona."

"She has the defenceless air of a woman who expects life to be unkind."

Later, Catherine Wilkin was to learn from bitter experience how cruel life can be.

Catherine and the man with whom she had shared her life for four years, actor Bill Stalker, in November 1981 were coming home after seeing a movie when Bill's motorcycle skidded on a bend.

Bill died in the accident.

Catherine, with bad cuts and hip and leg fractures, spent lonely and painful weeks in a Melbourne hospital.

The emotional pain was worse.

Her first steps back into the world were at the wedding of Gaynor Martin, who had worked with Bill Stalker on the Seven Network series *Skyways*.

Bill took his *Skyways* character Peter Fanelli to Seven's *Cop Shop* series.

Catherine had a continuing role in *Cop Shop* at that time.

She finished her stint shortly before the accident, and Bill was due to leave the show in November.

He planned to turn his attention to films.

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His death cut short those dreams — just days before Bill was to tape his final scenes with the *Cop Shop* team.

Now, almost a year after the accident, Catherine has resumed her own career.

She had roles in two forthcoming ABC-TV series, *Six Of The Best* and *Home*, and now is working a five-week stint in *Prisoner*.

Catherine gave TV WEEK her first interview since leaving hospital.

*SHE KEEPS HER EMOTIONS IN CHECK BUT IT IS CLEAR HER PAIN IS NEVER FAR FROM THE SURFACE.*

As one of her friends put it: "The spark looks to have gone out of her eyes. Even if she smiles, you're conscious of

• **CATHERINE WILKIN . . . the pain of tragedy is still there but life must go on — and that means work.**

• **BILL STALKER . . . a motorcycle tragedy ended his life.**

that sadness still there in her eyes."

But life goes on and Catherine is too professional not to give her best to the job at hand.

In this case it's the role of Janice Young, a new inmate at Wentworth who has been jailed after a motoring accident.

"Janice was involved in the accident



# brave comeback

but wasn't insured," Catherine said.

"The other driver has claimed it was her fault and insists on taking her to court when she refuses to pay up.

"She loses the case and ends up owing \$10,000 but says she'll go to jail rather than pay the money.

"All this has gone on before we see her come to Wentworth.

"It's a matter of principle for her, really.

"Her husband, Chris — played by Roger Oakley — isn't too happy about the stance she has taken.

"He has to look after the couple of kids while Janice is in jail.

"She could have paid off the money at \$1 a week but, while she's a quiet person, Janice obviously has a determined streak in her.

her home base for the immediate future.

"I've been here three and a half years, which is quite a long time," she said.

"I like moving around. I've sort of commuted, really, since 1974."

Catherine never considered running away from painful memories by packing up and going home to the security of New Zealand, where her parents still live.

She did go home briefly to spend some time with her family when she came out of hospital but with the work she is now doing in Melbourne it seems this is where she will stay.

And Catherine says her family would never think of trying to influence her towards a decision like that.

"They wouldn't think of putting pressure on me," Catherine said.

## 'YOU JUST TAKE THINGS DAY BY DAY. YOU JUST KEEP GOING'

"It's a nice role. There's a degree of conflict while Janice is inside, and five weeks is a good length of time to play around with a character.

"I couldn't go beyond that, anyway, as I'll be going on to something else."

That something else is a commitment to rejoin the Melbourne Theatre Company for a six-month season.

"We're doing three European and three Australian plays — rather like a repertory system," Catherine said.

"There's a nice variety of roles — even involving me in a bit of singing.

"Stage is where I started, although I find it extremely interesting to do TV. I've not really done any film work."

Catherine began acting in Christchurch, working with amateur theatre groups while doing a university course, then moved to Auckland and later Wellington to work with a number of full-time theatre companies before heading to Australia by way of the United Kingdom.

She had done little TV work before *Cop Shop*.

"There's that time pressure working in television," she said.

"One of the joys of theatre is you have so much more rehearsal time and you get to know the people you're working with."

Catherine hesitates about naming

"And I think by now they're used to having a travelling daughter.

"At the moment I'm very happy here. I've enjoyed being in Melbourne."

It is said the deep extent of camaraderie in the acting profession is never more apparent than when one of its members suffers a tragedy. Did this help Catherine through her ordeal?

"In every kind of work situation there's a supportiveness among people and colleagues," she said.

"I think, possibly, the transient nature of our work means we all know how hard it can be.

"But I find people are supportive generally and should be — not only in times of tragedy."

One friend who has been a tower of strength for Catherine since the accident is former *Skyways* star Tina Bursill.

Friends say it was Tina's support through some of the most difficult times that helped Catherine get back on her feet and face the challenge of returning to work.

When Catherine made her first post-accident appearance at the wedding of Gaynor Martin and rock entrepreneur Glenn Wheatley, Tina was with her and stayed close at her side.

But while she has had the support of a lot of good friends, it has been Catherine who has had to face the task of putting her life back together.

Does she now just want to try to forget the past and get on with her work?

"You can't forget the past," Catherine said quietly. Then she looked away suddenly.

"You just take things day by day.

"You just keep going."

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